THE OPINION OF THE PARLIAMENT,

About RELIGION, Twenty Years ago

BEING THE

VOTES, &c.

Of the Honourable House of Commons: *Febr.* 25. &c. 1662. Upon Reading His Majesties Gracious DECLARATION and SPEECH, *&c.*

Die Mercurii 25. Feb. 15. *Car. R.*

Resolved, &c. *nemine contradicente,*

THAT the humble thanks of this House be returned to his Majesty, for his Resolution to maintain the Act of Uniformity.

Resolved, &c.

That it be presented to the Kings Majesty as the humble Advice of this House, That no Indulgence be granted to the Dissenters from the Act of Uniformity.

Most Gracious Soveraign,

THe Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses, of the Commons House of Parliament, did with great Joy receive Your Majesties most Gracious Speech, at the opening this Session of Parliament, and being thereby invited to consider of your Declaration of the Twenty sixth of December *last; they have with all Sobriety, Duty, and Affection, examined the grounds thereof; and do by me present unto Your Majesty, Their most hearty Thanks for the same, and humble Advice thereupon; both which, I do beseech your Majesty, that You will vouchsafe me to deliver in their own words.*

May it please Your most excellent Majesty,

WE Your Majesties most Dutiful and Loyal Subjects, the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses of the House of Commons in Parliament Assembled, having with all Fidelity and Obedience, considered of the several matters comprised in Your Majesties late Gracious Declaration of the 26th. of *December* last, and Your most Gracious Speech at the beginning of this present Session,

Do, in the first place for our selves, and in the names of all the Commons of *England*, render to Your Sacred Majesty, the Tribute of our most hearty Thanks, for that infinite Grace and Goodness, wherewith Your Majesty hath been pleased to publish Your Royal Intentions of adhereing to Your Act of Indemnity, and Oblivion, by a Constant and Religious Observance of it. And our hearts are further enlarged in these returns of Thanksgiving, when we consider Your Majesties most Princely and Heroick Professions of relying upon the Affections of Your people, and abhorring all sort of Military and Arbitrary Rule. But above all, We can never enough remember, to the Honour of Your Majesties Piety, and our unspeakable Comfort, those solemn and most endearing Invitations of us Your Majesties Subjects to prepare Laws to be presented to Your Majesty, against the growth and increase of Popery; and withal, to provide more Laws against Licentiousness and Impiety; at the same time Declaring Your own Resolutions for maintaining the Act of Uniformity. And it becomes us always to acknowledg and admire Your Majesties Wisdom in this Your Declaration, whereby Your Majesty is pleased to resolve, not only by Sumptuary Laws, but by Your own Royal Example of Frugality, to restrain that excess in mens Expences, which is grown so general and so exorbitant; and to direct our Endeavours to find out fit and proper Laws for Advancement of Trade and Commerce.

After this we most humbly beseech Your Majesty to believe, That it is with extream unwillingness and reluctancy of heart, that we are brought to differ from any thing which Your Majesty hath thought fit to propose; And though we do no way doubt, but that the unreasonable Distempers of Mens spirits, and the many Mutinies and Conspiracies, which were carried on during the late Intervals of Parliament, did reasonably incline Your Majesty, to endeavour by Your Declaration to give some small allay to those ill humours, till the Parliament Assembled, and the hopes of Indulgence, if the Parliament should consent to it, especially seeing the pretenders to this Indulgence, did seem to make some

Titles

Titles to it, by Virtue of Your Majesties Declaration from *Breda*. Nevertheless, We your Majesties most Dutiful and Loyal Subjects, who are now returned to serve in Parliament, from those several parts and places of Your Kingdom, for which we are chosen, Do humbly offer to Your Majesties great Wisdom, That it is in no sort advisable that there be any Indulgence to such persons who presume to dissent from the Act of Uniformity, and the Religion Established,

For these Reasons,

WE have considered the nature of Your Majesties Declaration from *Breda*, and are humbly of opinion, That Your Majesty ought not to be pressed with it any further,

Because it is not a Promise in it self, but only a Gracious Declaration of Your Majesties Intentions, to do what in You lay, and what a Parliament should advise Your Majesty to do, and no such Advice was ever given, or thought fit to be offered; nor could it be otherwise understood, because there were Laws of Uniformity then in being, which could not be dispenced with, but by Act of Parliament.

They who do pretend a right to that supposed promise, put the Right into the hands of their Representatives, whom they chose to serve for them in this Parliament, who have passed, and Your Majesty consented to the Act of Uniformity. If any shall presume to say, that a Right to the benefit of this Declaration doth still remain after this Act passed,

It tends to dissolve the very Bonds of Government, and to suppose a disability in Your Majesty and the Houses of Parliament, to make a Law contrary to any part of Your Majesties Declaration, though both Houses should advise Your Majesty to it.

We have also considered the nature of the Indulgence proposed, with reference to those Consequences, which must necessarily attend it.

It will establish Schism by a Law, and make the whole Government of the Church precarious, and the Censures of it of no Moment or Consideration at all.

It will no way become the Gravity or Wisdome of a Parliament, to pass a Law at one Session for Uniformity, and at the next Session (the reasons of Uniformity continuing still the same) to pass another Law to frustrate or weaken the execution of it.

It will expose Your Majesty to the restless Importunity of every Sect or Opinion, and of every single person also, who shall presume to dissent from the Church of *England*.

It will be a cause of increasing Sects and Sectaries, whose numbers will weaken the true Protestant Profession so far, that it will at least be difficult for it, to defend it self against them: And, which is yet further considerable, these Numbers, which by being troublesom to the Government, find they can arrive to an Indulgence, will, as their Numbers increase, be yet more troublesome, that so at length they may arrive to a general Toleration, which Your Majesty hath declared against, and in time, some precedent Parliament will not dare to oppose for an Establishment, which, for ought can be foreseen, may end in Popery.

It is a thing altogether without President, and will take away all means of convicting Recusants, and be inconsistant with the method and proceedings of the Laws of *England*.

Lastly,

Laſtly, It is humbly conceived, that the Indulgence propoſed, will be ſo far from tending to the Peace of the Kingdom, that it is rather likely to occaſion great diſturbance. And on the contrary, That the aſſerting of the Laws, and the Religion eſtabliſht, according to the Act of Uniformity, is the moſt probable means to produce a ſetled Peace and Obedience throughout Your Kingdom: Becauſe the variety of Profeſſions in Religion, when openly indulged, doth directly diſtinguiſh men into parties, and withal, gives them opportunity to count their Numbers; which, conſidering the animoſities, that out of a Religious pride will be kept on foot by the ſeveral Factions, doth tend directly and inevitably to open diſturbance. Nor can Your Majeſty have any Security, that the Doctrine or Worſhip of the ſeveral Factions, which are all Governed by a ſeveral Rule, ſhall be conſiſtent with the Peace of Your Kingdom.

And if any perſons ſhall preſume to diſturb the Peace of the Kingdom, We do in all humility declare, That we will for ever, and in all Occaſions, be ready with our utmoſt endeavour and aſſiſtance, to adhere to, and ſerve Your Majeſty according to our bounden Duty and Allegiance.

FINIS.

London, Printed for *William Crook*, 1682.

B4052